2007–2008

Saskatchewan

Provincial Budget

Performance Plan

Saskatchewan Labour

Ministers' Message

It is our pleasure to present the annual Performance Plan for the Department of Labour for 2007-08 and beyond.

Our province has a vision of being the best place for people to live, work and build strong futures. The work of Saskatchewan Labour plays an important part in bringing that vision to life, by ensuring safe, fair and productive workplaces and working to achieve full equality for Saskatchewan women. In addition, we must also be mindful of workforce sustainability. To that end, we are pleased to have been charged with stewardship of the Government's response to the Report of *The Commission on Improving Work Opportunities for Saskatchewan Residents.*

The Department's work touches on most aspects of modern work life. In addition to the responsibilities of the Labour Standards Branch and Occupational Health and Safety Division, the Department is also involved in a range of other workplace-related areas, including: providing practical assistance to Saskatchewan employers, employees and community organizations interested in developing better work-family balance; helping or representing any worker, or worker's dependant, involved in a dispute with the Workers' Compensation Board about a compensation claim; and, providing information, training, bargaining assistance and mediation to labour and management in a unionized workplace. The Department also remains committed to pursuing equality for women in all their diversity.

The work of the Status of Women Office touches the lives of many different groups of Saskatchewan people. We work to ensure Saskatchewan women have the ability to fully contribute to, and benefit from, our province's robust economy and community life. We work with women's stakeholder groups across our province to help Saskatchewan build safe and healthy communities and increase women's economic independence.

As in previous years, the key actions outlined in this year's Performance Plan represent fundamental undertakings that we are committed to seeing implemented. A report on the Department's actual progress toward these goals will be published in July 2008.

Saskatchewan Labour is eager to continue working with its partners in the women's community and the labour and business sectors. We are confident that by working together we will be able to take full advantage of the opportunities that 2007-08 presents.

David Forbes
Minister of Labour

Joan Beatty
Minister Responsible for the
Status of Women

Who We Are

The mandate of the Department is to ensure safe, fair and productive workplaces in Saskatchewan. The Department's authority is derived through key legislation, including: *The Trade Union Act, The Labour Standards Act, The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993,* and *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act.* The mandate is further supported through programming, which focuses on prevention, education and training services; promoting, developing and enforcing occupational health and safety and labour standards; providing support to injured workers; and assisting in preventing and resolving workplace disputes. The Department also provides strategic direction and leadership to government on issues that impact women. The Department works in partnership with all other provincial departments and Crown Corporations towards the goal of equality for all Saskatchewan women. The Department, through the Status of Women Office, is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women.*

Saskatchewan Labour works with employees and employers in a variety of ways to help ensure positive workplaces and prevent negative outcomes within work environments. The Department has 179.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions in offices in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Estevan, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Swift Current and Yorkton. Our mission reflects the realization that a thriving economy depends upon a shared commitment to safety, co-operation and equity by all employees and employers.

The Department's activities are categorized into seven main areas that focus on achieving our vision of healthy workplaces and the equality of women and our goals that support the economic and social development of the Province.

LABOUR RELATIONS AND MEDIATION

The Labour Relations and Mediation Division provides information, training, bargaining assistance and mediation to labour and management in unionized workplaces. The Division assists unions and management to resolve difficult labour disputes and work stoppages due to strikes and lockouts. Conciliation is provided to parties involved in collective bargaining disputes. Grievance mediation helps parties resolve issues prior to the arbitration stage. The Division also helps parties improve communication and enhance, as well as rebuild, both working and bargaining relationships. The Division assists parties with interest based negotiation (IBN), and grievance and workplace mediation, in order to prevent workplace conflict or resolve existing conflict. It delivers training to unionized workplaces in the areas of IBN and Conflict Resolution, to improve participants' problem-solving skills.

LABOUR STANDARDS

The Labour Standards Branch provides services to Saskatchewan employers and employees in support of fair and equitable workplace practices. The Branch's aim is not only to enforce the legislation, but also to ensure employees and employers are aware of their rights and responsibilities under these laws.

Our initiatives and activities are designed to encourage increased awareness of, and foster adherence to, labour standards legislation. Providing timely access to pertinent labour standards information (in-person, electronically, by telephone, by mail, with paper documents or over the web), developing and providing individualized responses to workplace circumstances, partnering with educational institutions and industry organizations to disseminate information, targeting noncompliant sectors, investigating and resolving formal, anonymous and third party complaints, initiating collection action and prosecuting persistent offenders; all factor into our compliance strategy.

The Branch is also involved in facilitating the integration of "Working in Saskatchewan" curriculum module on Labour Standards into additional post-secondary programs at SIAST (previously developed with SIAST for the Continuing Care Assistant program) as well as the secondary level "Ready for Work" resources. This involves strategic development, delivery and distribution of integrated programs and educational resources to address the principles of fair workplace practices in partnership with a broad base of stakeholders, including: government; educational institutions; Aboriginal organizations; community-based organizations; and business and labour groups.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division works to improve workplace health and safety through five inter-related and complementary strategies embodied in the *Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces.* These include: increasing employer/worker involvement in reducing workplace hazards; enforcing standards through workplace inspections and other enforcement tools; providing workplaces with technical support to identify and reduce hazards in such areas as air quality, radiation and ergonomics; providing youth and future workers with health and safety orientation before reaching the workplace; and increasing public awareness that health and safety must be part of workplace culture. Further information is available on the web at www.worksafesask.ca.

The Occupational Health and Safety Division receives advice on these strategies from three provincial advisory groups: the Occupational Health and Safety Council; the Farm Health and Safety Council; and the Radiation Health and Safety Committee. To deliver the education and enforcement initiatives, we work in partnership with such organizations as Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board, the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Learning, SIAST, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and Human Resources Development and Skills Canada.

The Occupational Health and Safety Division focuses its education services on assisting with integrating health and safety information into curricula and providing resources. The *Ready for Work* program has been developed for secondary and post-secondary curricula and is being expanded to include middle years curricula; and *Grow Up With Safety* has been developed for the younger grades and includes a rural and community farm focus.

Saskatchewan Labour and the University of Saskatchewan signed a five-year agreement in September 1999, extended it for an additional year in August 2005 and have negotiated a further five-year agreement whereby Saskatchewan Labour provides annual funding to the University of Saskatchewan, Department of Medicine, to provide three services: Occupational Health Physician, Chief Occupational Medical Officer (COMO), pursuant to section 79 of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993,* Occupational Health Clinic; and research and education on occupational health and safety issues.

The Occupational Health Clinic's activities are guided by an Advisory Board whose members include one representative from the Occupational Health and Safety Division, Saskatchewan Labour, one worker representative from the OHS Council, one employer representative from the OHS Council, one representative from the Saskatchewan Medical Association and one from the University of Saskatchewan.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) promotes a safe and healthy working environment by providing information and advice about occupational health and safety. Saskatchewan Labour provides annual funding to the CCOHS to provide Saskatchewan workplaces with the opportunity to access this information and advice at no cost.

A tripartite council representing governments (federal, provincial and territorial), employers and labour governs the CCOHS. The Executive Director of the OHS Division is the Province's representative on the Council of Governors.

WORKER'S ADVOCATE

The Office of the Worker's Advocate provides assistance to, and representation for, any worker, or a dependant of a worker, who has suffered an industrial accident or disease and who is involved in a dispute with the Workers' Compensation Board concerning a compensation claim. The Worker's Advocate represent injured workers or their dependants at all levels of appeal with the Workers' Compensation Board. While the main focus is the representation of workers through the appeals process, the Office also assists injured workers or their dependants in any way that enables them to obtain the benefits to which they are entitled, without having to take the dispute through the formal appeals process on their own.

WORK AND FAMILY

The Work and Family Unit uses a capacity-building approach, which provides practical assistance to Saskatchewan employers, employees and community organizations to deal with issues of stress and fatigue that arise out of the lack of balance between work and family. This assistance includes workplace consultation services, training, and application of practical tools for creating workplaces that are more family-friendly as well as a range of educational and knowledge transfer services that assist employers and employees to work towards change that is suitable for their workplaces. The Unit develops workplace recognition events such as the *Saskatchewan Work and Family Balance Awards,* and emergent opportunities for employers to discuss their work-family balance innovations. The Unit also facilitates partnership groups that focus on work-family issues at the local level.

PLANNING AND POLICY

Economic development and growth in Saskatchewan is strongly influenced by fair and balanced labour legislation. The Planning and Policy Division works with employees, employers and the associations that represent them, as well as community-based organizations and the general public, to ensure that policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks balance the interests of employees and employers by promoting and regulating healthy and safe workplaces, co-operation and employer and employee rights and responsibilities in Saskatchewan. The Division also collects and disseminates statistics and other information on conditions of labour in Saskatchewan.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The Status of Women Office is a single window into government for women's organizations and provides strategic direction and leadership to government on policy direction affecting the status of Saskatchewan women.

The *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* provides a framework to guide the government in addressing women's equality issues in the Province. In partnership with all government departments and Crown Corporations, through the Intra-governmental Committee of Advisors on Women's Policy, the goal is to achieve economic and social equality for Saskatchewan women.

Plan at a Glance

This is the sixth performance plan publicly released by the Department of Labour; it builds on the 2006-07 plan released with the 2006-07 budget. The Performance Plan will evolve over time as the strategic planning, performance management and public reporting processes mature and stakeholder feedback is incorporated.

The goals and objectives identified in the Plan are multi-year in nature. Over time, we will work towards achieving our objectives in support of meeting our broader, long-term goals. A series of key actions for the 2007-08 fiscal year has been developed that support advancement towards achieving our objectives. In addition, a set of performance measures (outlined below) has been developed that will be used to gauge our progress in achieving our objectives. The Department will report on actual progress at year-end in the 2007-08 Annual Report.

VISION

A prosperous Saskatchewan that benefits from healthy workplaces and the equality of women

GOAL 1

Fair workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Increased awareness of, and adherence to, labour standards legislation*

Performance Measure

- Per cent of the non-agricultural workforce that filed a complaint with the Labour Standards Branch

GOAL 2

Co-operative workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Facilitate the timely resolution of collective bargaining disputes*

Performance Measures

- Per cent of agreements resolved in conciliation without a work stoppage
- Per cent of agreements concluded in conciliation where a strike or lockout has occurred
- Per cent of grievances resolved in mediation

GOAL 3

Healthy and safe workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Improved workplace health and safety*

Performance Measures

- Per cent of Saskatchewan workers who are working in provincially regulated workplaces (with 10 or more workers) that have Occupational Health Committees
- Lost-time injury rate for workers covered by Workers' Compensation
- Per cent of Practical and Applied Arts high-school students receiving occupational health and safety orientation as part of the *Ready for Work* program

***OBJECTIVE 2** – Improved work-family/life balance*

Performance Measures

- Number of workplaces/organizations that request assistance in becoming aware of work and family issues
- Number of work and family community-based partnerships
- Number of workplaces/organizations that the Unit is assisting to make workplace change (culture, policies, practices) through the application of *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* and other training and consultation as provided by the Work and Family Unit
- Number of projects/programs undertaken within the "sector engagement plan" which seeks to engage employees and employers who, to date, have not been actively engaged in the work-family balance discourse (e.g., First Nations and Métis, low wage, retail and hospitality sector, small business, rural and northern)

***OBJECTIVE 3** – Fair and timely resolution of Workers' Compensation appeals on behalf of injured workers*

Performance Measure

- Number of files waiting for the services of a Worker's Advocate
- Average length of time-injured workers must wait for the services of a Worker's Advocate

GOAL 4

Equality of Saskatchewan women

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Increase women's ability to contribute to, and benefit from, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities and resources*

Performance Measure

- Number of communities, out of a total of 20 identified northern communities, represented in a northern women's network

2007-08 Financial Overview

Saskatchewan Labour will expense $16.83 million to deliver its programs and services throughout the Province in 2007-08.

Department funding supports healthy and safe, fair and co-operative workplaces in Saskatchewan and the equality of women. Health and safety and labour standards are promoted through prevention, education and training services and through legislative enforcement. The Department provides support to injured workers and assists in preventing and resolving workplace disputes. The Department also works in partnership with other provincial departments towards the goal of equality for all Saskatchewan women. The breakdown of Department spending by program area is shown below:

2007-08 ESTIMATES	*(thousands of dollars)*
Central Management and Services	$ 5,083
Labour Standards	2,344
Labour Relations Board	879
Labour Relations and Mediation	599
Occupational Health and Safety	6,857
Worker's Advocate	603
Status of Women Office	451
Total Appropriation	$ 16,816
Capital Acquisitions	0
Amortization	14
Total Expense	$ 16,830
REVENUES	$ 9,659
FTE Staff Complement	179.3

Funding for third parties is budgeted at $161,400 for 2007-08 for the University of Saskatchewan (Chief Occupational Medical Officer) and $30,000 for the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

Trends and Issues

The following, which illustrate the scope of the issues surrounding the modern workplace, are directly tied to the objectives and actions of the Department of Labour's Performance Plan.

CHANGING WORK PATTERNS

The modern workplace is more complex and diverse and difficult to define from that of 30 years ago. Work is undergoing both structural and demographic change. Not only is the very composition of the workforce significantly different, new industries, technologies, methods of work and markets have emerged in recent decades that have dynamically altered where, when, by and for whom work is now performed.

- The structure of organizations is shifting, as centralized, vertically integrated companies are changing to decentralized, networked operations.
- Full-time work does not necessarily mean a 36 or 40-hour work week – in some industries it can be less than 30 hours a week.
- Flexible work processes, including scheduling hours of work is standard in many industries as a result of consumer demands and/or competition.
- Home-based business, telework and e-commerce have grown rapidly.
- Occupations requiring a high level of knowledge and skill, which did not exist 20 years ago, are prevalent.
- The issue of sustainability of jobs in industries that are subject to economic pressures due either to environmental or market forces is increasingly important.

Employment relationships have changed dramatically – and will continue to evolve as work changes.

- Today's employees are better educated, more mobile and have higher workplace expectations.
- While permanent full-time employment remains the norm for most employees today, many new jobs are being filled on a temporary or contract basis.
- Whereas employees once spent their entire career with one employer, they can now expect to change jobs many times over their work-life.
- Employees are now more likely to be balancing work and family responsibilities – among parents with children five years of age or under, 73 per cent of mothers with partners (including married, common-law or same-sex partners) are employed, as are approximately 74 per cent of lone-parent mothers and 93 per cent of fathers with partners (*Vanier Institute of the Family, 2004*).

Though full-time jobs still predominate, part-time, contingent, contract and self employment now comprise a rapidly growing proportion of all work performed. Statistics Canada suggests that 20 per cent to 25 per cent of employed Canadians are in "non-standard" work relationships. Workers in such arrangements, many of whom are considered vulnerable workers, have more unemployment and underemployment, more instability of income, less access to employer-provided benefits and are inadequately protected by labour legislation. This group is largely made up of women, young people, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and Aboriginal people.

Some aspects of women's engagement with the labour market have shifted over the last three decades, while others appear remarkably resistant to change. One of the most dramatic trends in the labour force over the past 30 years has been the increase in the number of women, particularly younger women, in the labour force. In 2005, 76 per cent of women in Saskatchewan between 15 and 64 years of age were employed or looking for work. This participation rate is well above the national average.

What has not changed is that, overall, men and women continue to work at different jobs, to work in different industrial sectors, and to be paid differently. Women's attachment to the labour force continues to be characterized by an over-representation in part-time work, occupational segregation and average wage rates that are lower than those paid to men. Nationally, women have consistently represented 70 per cent of the part-time workforce for the past 30 years.

In 2005, more than half of Saskatchewan's female work force was clustered in three industries. On average, females in Saskatchewan are paid 84 per cent of men's hourly wages. It is particularly striking that females are, on average, paid less than males in every industrial sector in the province and in every occupational group – even in clerical occupations.

In Saskatchewan, Aboriginal women, particularly First Nations women, are under-represented in the labour force. Among Aboriginal women, First Nations women have much lower employment rates than Métis women. The 21 per cent gap in employment rates between Saskatchewan's Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women in 2005 was the widest gap among Canada's western provinces.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Saskatchewan Labour addresses workplace issues by continuously reviewing key labour legislation to ensure that the standards they establish reflect changing patterns of work. The Occupational Health and Safety Council's review of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993* and *Regulations* was completed in 2005-06 and implementation of Council's recommendations will begin in 2007-08 after extensive consultations. Other legislative reviews that are underway include *The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979, The Labour Standards Regulations, 1995* and *The Minimum Wage Regulations.*

One critical issue impacted by the changing nature of work is the ability of the current labour regulatory regime to address new demands. The industrial model of work, as characterized by centralized production, fixed work schedules and full-time, permanent work, allows for little flexibility. The "post industrial" model, as characterized by the current growth sectors of knowledge, information and service, globalization and free trade, is dramatically altering the way we work. Periodic reviews of labour legislation ensure that the rules that govern the way we work reflect how we work. The Department also undertakes educational activities to help employers, employees and the public better understand resolving workplace disputes around collective bargaining, workplace health and safety, rights and responsibilities in the workplace and work and family/life issues.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

Meeting the needs of the labour market in the face of labour shortages will require greater reliance on Aboriginal people, people with disabilities and persons of visible minority who are currently under-represented in the labour force. Aboriginal people, according to Statistics Canada, are the fastest growing segment of Saskatchewan's potential labour pool, having grown from 7.8 per cent of the provincial population in 1986 to 13.5 per cent in 2001. The *Ready for Work* program, which is also used in First Nations' schools, helps prepare young people to enter the workforce.

One of the most profound changes in the last part of the 20th Century has been the large-scale entry of women into the workforce, increasingly in non-traditional occupations. However, women still represent a very small percentage of transportation and construction workers. Furthermore, both large corporations and small businesses are encouraging women to consider careers in traditionally male-dominated fields by creating workplace cultures that attract, retain and promote women. Saskatchewan Labour will work with private sector companies, Crown corporations, and other partners in Saskatchewan to make the business case for increasing women's participation in senior decision-making roles. Initiatives outlined in the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* will work to increase the participation of women in the labour force.

WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESS

A safe, healthy, family-friendly, fair and equitable workplace is a key contributor to the province's social and economic well-being. Injuries and inequity in the workplace exact a heavy toll on employers and employees, particularly new entrants to the labour force. In 2005, claims costs (compensation, health care, vocational rehabilitation and an increase in the benefits liabilities) paid by the Workers' Compensation Board totalled $206 million (*Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board Annual Report, 2005*). These costs reflect the fact that Saskatchewan has one of the highest time-loss injury rates in Canada. Since the launch of Saskatchewan Labour's *Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces* in September 2003 to address the high number of workplaces injuries, we have seen some progress and fewer Saskatchewan workers are being injured. The province's injury rate has dropped from 4.95 per cent in 2002 to 4.05 per cent by the end of 2006.

The Department works to improve workplace health and safety through five inter-related and complementary strategies. These are:

- engaging employers and workers in reducing workplace hazards;
- making legal standards for healthy and safe work known and enforcing them;
- providing workplaces with health and safety services to meet standards, including research, technical services, information, education and training;
- providing youth and future workers with basic health and safety orientation before entering the workforce; and
- increasing public awareness to promote healthy and safe practices as part of the community and workplace culture.

Increasingly, the challenge in helping make workplaces safer and healthier will require changing work design and practices to better address the needs of our diverse workforce, including gender, age and cultural factors.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Positive employer/employee relations that reflect co-operation and teamwork are essential to meeting the challenges of the changing nature of work, thereby maintaining Saskatchewan's competitive position. Prosperity and economic growth and further development of the provincial economy are dependent on high levels of worker productivity. This can be achieved through stable labour relations brought about by an open and unimpeded collective bargaining process. To date in 2006, there were only five strikes involving 1,005 workers or less than one per cent of Saskatchewan's paid workers.

Saskatchewan Labour works to prevent work stoppages by providing conciliation, mediation and grievance mediation services, as well as training to foster improved labour/management communications and relationships.

BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY/LIFE

A substantial increase in the number of dual-earner families has intensified the stress and fatigue many employees experience as they attempt to balance their work-family/life responsibilities. Research shows that work-family conflict impacts on the economic well-being of business and service organizations in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Studies also show that young employees tend to be interested in achieving work and family balance, and that family-friendly workplaces are likely to become a critical recruitment and retention factor in addressing labour force shortages. Research further documents how specific increases in health care utilization are tied to work family stress in Canada. This has stimulated both employee and employer interest in government taking a lead to assist them to address this issue.

Through the Work and Family Unit, the Department provides practical assistance to Saskatchewan employers, employees and community organizations as they move towards creating more family-friendly workplaces.

ADVANCING EQUALITY FOR SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN

Women play a key role in the economic, social, political and cultural development of Saskatchewan but do not have the same access to opportunity, security and independence, as do many men. Poverty, income and earnings, violence in the home and harassment in the workplace, adequate housing and health care, employment and training needs, balancing work and family, and women's care giving responsibilities for children and elderly, not only affect women and their families, they affect society as a whole and government at all levels.

Addressing women's priorities in a meaningful way requires a high level of co-ordination of many government departments' activities. This role is the responsibility of the Status of Women Office. The framework for addressing these issues is contained in the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women.*

Changes from 2006-07 Performance Plan

While the Department's plan remains largely unchanged from its 2006-07 plan, trendline information is provided for performance measures for the first time in the 2007-08 Performance Plan. One new objective, "Increase women's ability to contribute to, and benefit from, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities," has replaced the objective in the previous plan.

The following new performance measure will be developed to gauge progress in meeting the objective of this goal:

- The number of communities, out of 20 northern communities, represented in a northern women's network.

The following performance measure is added to gauge progress in meeting Objective 2 of Goal 3:

Improved work-family/life balance:

- Number of projects/programs undertaken within the "sector engagement plan" which seeks to engage employees and employers who, to date, have not been actively engaged in the work-family balance discourse (e.g., First Nations and Métis, low wage, retail and hospitality sector, small business, rural and northern).

Goals, Objectives, Actions and Measures

This section provides the detailed 2007-08 Performance Plan for the Department. Under each goal, a number of objectives have been established that support progress towards the broader goal statement. For each objective, a set of key actions that will be completed in 2007-08 has been identified. They are the means for making progress on the objectives. In addition, a set of performance measures has been developed to gauge progress towards the objectives.

The following principles guide the Department in the development of policy and delivery of programs and services to support government objectives:

Equity:	Demonstrate and promote the value of representative workplaces
Accountability:	Conduct all Departmental business in an effective, efficient, timely, transparent, consultative and fiscally responsible manner
Respect:	Be culturally and gender sensitive in the development and delivery of policies, programs and legislation
Fairness:	Balance the interests of stakeholders in conducting all Departmental business
Quality:	Ensure that proactive, client-focused services reflect social and individual expectations
Recognition:	Acknowledge the valuable contributions staff make in achieving the Department's mandate

GOAL 1

Fair workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Increase awareness of, and adherence to, labour standards legislation*

Globalization, technological advances; adjustments in the demographic structure of the workforce; work and family responsibility issues; and worker vulnerabilities all affect the workplace. As the workplace adapts, our objective is to ensure that there continues to be workplace support for, and adherence to, legislated standards. Compliance has a positive effect on the economy as the parties can focus their energies on the goals of the establishment. Conversely, non-compliance leads to disputes and/or complacency that detracts or refocuses the energies away from those goals.

Our initiatives and activities are designed to encourage increased awareness of, and foster adherence to, labour standards legislation. Providing timely access to pertinent labour standards information (in-person, electronically, by telephone, by mail, with paper documents or over the

web), developing and providing individualized responses to workplace circumstances, partnering with educational institutions and industry organizations to disseminate information, targeting noncompliant sectors, investigating and resolving formal, anonymous and third party complaints and prosecuting persistent offenders; all factor in our compliance strategy.

The awareness of the legislation objective is gauged through routine interaction (meetings, presentations, enforcement activities) with individuals and organizations, as well as periodic focus group testing and stakeholder surveys. Adherence to labour standards legislation is measured by the level of complaints received and the results of targeted initiatives.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Undertake approximately 2,500 Labour Standards investigations in response to formal complaints. Assess approximately $1.5 million in unpaid wages.
- Accept and investigate anonymous or third party complaints where there is evidence to suggest non-compliance with *The Labour Standards Act* and *Regulations.*
- Undertake and continue to develop collection strategies in support of workers with past due wages that have been earned but not paid.
- Recommend prosecuting violators who after being informed of their responsibilities and obligations under *The Labour Standards Act* and *Regulations,* persist in non-compliant behaviors, or refuse to make whole a deficiency.
- Maintain a toll-free Inquiry-Line Call Centre to provide labour standards information to the 50,000-70,000 workers, employers and human resource practitioners who call annually.
- Develop an additional information package in the series, "Did You Know," Labour Standards for Industry (by sector), similar to the ones previously produced for the restaurant and retail sectors, to inform employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace.
- Facilitate the integration of "Working in Saskatchewan" curriculum module, on Labour Standards and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), into additional post-secondary programs at SIAST (previously developed with SIAST for the Continuing Care Assistant program).
- Help young people make the transition from school to work by training 160 teachers to deliver work skills education to approximately 4,000 students.
- Help young Aboriginal people receive health and safety and labour standards information to make the transition from school to work.
- Review and consider the recommendations contained in the Minimum Wage Board Report on the minimum age of employment and transportation of employees who finish work late at night.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Per cent of the non-agricultural workforce that filed a complaint with the Labour Standards Branch	0.6% *[2005-06]* 0.5% *[2004-05]* 0.6% *[2003-04]*

This measure quantifies the number of complaints received by the Labour Standards Branch divided by the total non-agricultural workforce. Complaints can be further categorized by major industry sectors (Primary, Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation and Warehousing, Trade, Finance, Insurance and Real Estate, Service and Public Administration). The agricultural workforce is not covered by labour standards legislation; therefore, this segment of the workforce has been excluded from the calculation.

Measurement results provide insight into the level of compliance with the labour standards legislation and will assist the Department in reallocating or refocusing resources and efforts towards sectors with unacceptable compliance and complaints rates. The Department can have a significant impact on workplaces found in non-compliance; however, it has a low level of influence on complaints filed. Adverse economic conditions, bankruptcies and insolvencies, which result in the loss of jobs and the non-payment of wages, tend to have a negative impact on the compliance measure.

GOAL 2

Co-operative workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Facilitate the timely resolution of collective bargaining disputes*

Collective bargaining disputes have an impact on employee/employer relationships, overall worker productivity, the financial position of employers and ultimately the provincial economy. Timely resolution of disputes minimizes the negative impacts caused by disputes. High profile, protracted disputes may require special expertise, which puts pressure on Departmental resources and increases program costs.

Key Actions for 2007-08

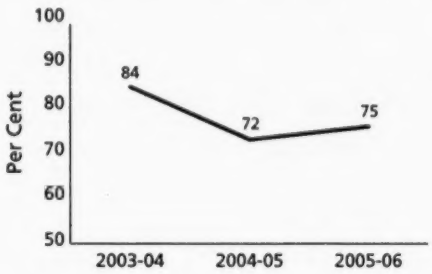
- Provide conciliation services to employers and unions requesting assistance to resolve disputes and conclude negotiations to establish or renew collective agreements.
- Conduct grievance mediations at the request of the parties to resolve disputes, which involve the interpretation and application of collective agreements.

- Act as an agent for the Labour Relations Board to assist in the settlement of first collective agreements, and provide conciliation or mediation services that are directed by the Board.
- Deliver training sessions to facilitate interest-based bargaining and increase knowledge and awareness of conflict resolution skills that can be applied in the workplace.
- Assess and mediate workplace conflict.
- Develop a policy for appointing special mediators, including the criteria and circumstances under which one would be appointed.

What are we measuring?

Per cent of agreements resolved in conciliation without a work stoppage

Progress to date



We are measuring our ability to assist the parties to move forward in the collective bargaining process, whether that means resolving grievances, concluding collective agreements, or allowing them to make other choices about alternatives such as arbitration versus strikes and lockouts.

Performance results may vary from year to year. Work undertaken by the Labour Relations and Mediation Division is subject to client demand and is cyclical in nature. The Department has no influence on the level of client demand; rather, the parties bear complete responsibility for concluding their own agreement. The role of conciliation is to bridge the differences between the parties and assist them in achieving a settlement.

What are we measuring?

Per cent of agreements concluded in conciliation where a strike or lockout has occurred

Progress to date

72%
[2005-06]

100%
[2004-05]

100%
[2003-04]

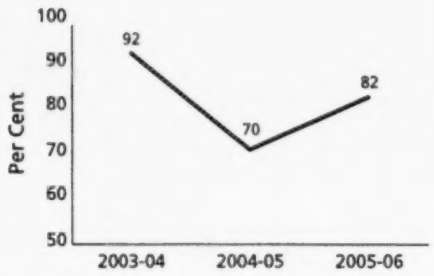
We are measuring our ability to assist parties to negotiate through an impasse or deadlock and achieve a collective agreement that will bring an end to a strike or lock out.

These results may vary somewhat from year to year. The parties may consider using other dispute resolution mechanisms like interest arbitration to achieve final settlement of their differences. When this occurs, the Division would have no impact on the settlement. Mediation can assist the parties to resolve grievances in a great many cases but they retain the option to continue on to arbitration if that process better meets their needs.

What are we measuring?

Per cent of grievances resolved in mediation

Progress to date



We are measuring our ability to assist the parties to effectively resolve grievances as an alternative to the more expensive, time-consuming arbitration process.

Mediation can assist the parties to resolve grievances in a great many cases, but they retain the option to continue on to arbitration if that process better meets their needs.

Performance results may vary from year to year. Work undertaken by the Division is subject to client demand and is cyclical in nature.

GOAL 3

Healthy and safe workplaces

***OBJECTIVE 1** – Improved workplace health and safety*

Each year, over four per cent of our provincial workforce (*Workers' Compensation Board Annual Report, 2005*) suffers from a work-related injury or illness severe enough to take them off the job. The Province's social and economic well-being depends on healthy and safe workplaces.

The Department works to improve workplace health and safety through five inter-related and complementary strategies. These are: engaging employers and workers in reducing workplace hazards; making legal standards for healthy and safe work known and enforcing them; providing workplaces with health and safety services to meet standards, including research, technical

services, information, education and training; providing youth and future workers with basic health and safety orientation before entering the workforce; and increasing public awareness to promote healthy and safe practices as part of the community and workplace culture.

Changing demographics and rapid industry growth impact the number of workplace injuries and illnesses, and therefore the focus of different initiatives. For example, the Saskatchewan workforce is generally aging and the injury and illness rates of workers over 45 years of age are increasing; particularly in the health care sector. Growth industries, such as the petroleum and mining sectors, tend to have more inexperienced workers who in turn have higher injury rates than more experienced workers.

Key Actions for 2007-08

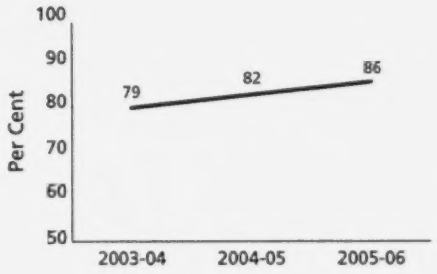
- Reduce lost-time injuries by a further three per cent by continuing the focus on the increased number of worksite inspections and providing education, training and technical support on identifying and controlling workplace hazards.
- Develop and support the Saskatchewan workplace responsibility system through engaging employers and workers in reducing workplace hazards by:
  - ~ supporting the over 4,600 current occupational health committees and adding 300 new committees with a focus on larger, higher-risk workplaces;
  - ~ providing training opportunities to 4,500 employer and worker representatives in 225 courses on the responsibilities of occupational health committees, occupational health and safety representatives and supervisors; and
  - ~ helping workplaces develop occupational health and safety programs or systems in approximately 1,600 higher-risk workplaces, focusing on 400 workplaces with the highest rate of injuries and illnesses.
- Improve compliance with Saskatchewan legal standards for healthy and safe work by:
  - ~ making sure standards are known and enforced through approximately 4,500 worksite inspections per year;
  - ~ issuing more notices of contravention to ensure standards are met; and
  - ~ prosecuting for serious or repeated non-compliance with health and safety standards.
- Provide health and safety services for workplaces to meet health and safety standards by:
  - ~ providing 4,500 technical services in such areas as hygiene, toxicology, ergonomics and radiation with increasing emphasis on ergonomic and radiation safety;
  - ~ undertaking applied research to reduce workplace hazards in at least 10 targeted industries and occupations;
  - ~ enhancing technical support to workplaces to better manage hazards and address emerging issues in workplace conditions and communicable diseases; and
  - ~ providing information, education and training through presentations, publications and websites.

- Increase healthy and safe work practices as part of community and workplace cultures through:
  - ~ *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* promotion activities such as the WorkSafe website with e-learning tools and over 1,100 articles; and
  - ~ partnerships with public and private agencies, such as North American Occupational Safety and Health Week.
- Facilitate the integration of "Working in Saskatchewan" curriculum module on Labour Standards and Occupational Health and Safety into additional post-secondary programs at SIAST (previously developed with SIAST for the Continuing Care Assistant program).
- Help young people make the transition from school to work by training 160 teachers to deliver work skills education to approximately 4,000 students.
- Help young Aboriginal people receive health and safety and labour standards information to make the transition from school to work.
- Based on the recommendations of the Workers' Compensation Act Committee of Review as approved by Cabinet, amend *The Workers' Compensation Act, 1979,* and the *Regulations* to ensure that the compensation system is up-to-date, fair and responsive.
- Based on the recommendations of the Occupational Health and Safety Council as approved by Cabinet, and after extensive consultations, amend *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993,* and the *Regulations* to enhance the health and safety of Saskatchewan workers by ensuring that occupational health and safety standards are effective and up to date.

What are we measuring?

Per cent of Saskatchewan workers who are working in provincially regulated workplaces (with 10 or more workers) that have Occupational Health Committees (OHC)

Progress to date



Saskatchewan has developed a workplace responsibility system based on the active participation of employers and workers to meet or exceed OHS standards. Committees are a critical part of this self-monitoring system that keeps workplaces safe. They promote workplace safety in several ways, including workplace inspections, education, promotion/awareness initiatives and minutes that record committee activities to resolve workplace hazards. All provincially regulated workplaces with 10 or more workers are required to have OHCs comprised of workers and employer representatives.

The number of workers covered by active OHCs is divided by the estimated number of workers in provincially regulated workplaces with 10 or more workers. The OHC is a key mechanism to promote worker involvement and shared responsibility for workplace health and safety.

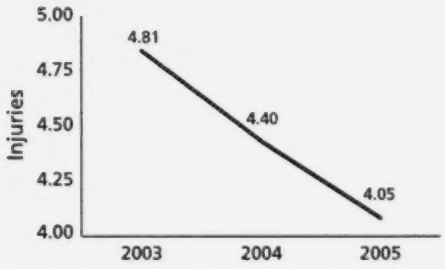
The Department has direct influence over the percentage of workers covered by OHCs to the extent the legislated requirements are enforced. The actual rate of compliance will be impacted by the commitment of employers to implement and support an OHC, particularly in smaller, more transient workplaces.

What are we measuring?

Lost-time injury rate for workers covered by Workers' Compensation

Progress to date

Number of injuries per 100 workers per year



The lost-time injury rate measures the number of injuries reported to, and accepted by, Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) per 100 full-time equivalent workers. The number of WCB accepted claims, in a calendar year, involving lost-time from work is divided by the estimated number of full-time equivalent workers based on Statistics Canada industry average wage data and WCB payroll information. As not all workers are covered by WCB, not all workers report injuries or illnesses and the estimated number of full-time workers is a derived number; the rate is a proxy for the actual number of workplace injuries or illnesses.

Every year, over four per cent of our workforce suffers from a work-related injury or illness severe enough to take them off the job. In 2002, 15,174 Saskatchewan workers lost time from their jobs – a lost-time injury rate of 4.95 per cent. We set an initial target of a 20 per cent reduction – down to four per cent in 2007. The 2006 injury rate was 4.05 per cent, bringing us very close to meeting this goal. Despite the fact that Saskatchewan has experienced one of the biggest decreases in injury rates in the country, the Province will still likely be the second highest in Canada, with Manitoba being the highest. We have established a further goal for Phase II of this initiative to bring our injury rate to 3.5 per cent by 2011.

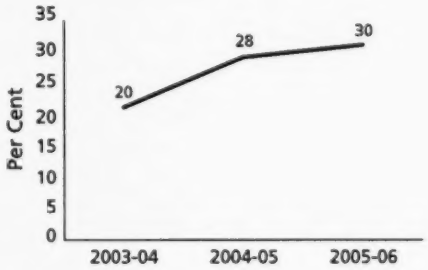
The lost-time injury rate is commonly used in other jurisdictions and provides an indicator of the relative number, type and severity of injuries for most workplaces. The data is based on WCB statistics and, consequently, some workers, notably most farmers and farm workers, are excluded. The data is based on reported and accepted claims. Also, the data tends to focus on traumatic events, such as injuries rather than illnesses, and as different industries tend to have different reported injury rates, changes in type of employment can affect the overall rate.

The Department has a low level of influence on the overall workplace injury rate. Economic factors among many others influence, on a yearly basis, workplace injuries.

What are we measuring?

Per cent of Practical and Applied Arts high school students receiving occupational health and safety orientation as part of the *Ready for Work* program

Progress to date



Practical and Applied Arts teachers who have been trained in the Ready for Work program, which promotes understanding about workplace safety, fairness and co-operation, helps prepare high school students to participate productively in the workplace.

Saskatchewan Labour has no influence over the Practical and Applied Arts courses that are offered in provincial high schools. However, through our ongoing collaborative working relationship with the Curriculum and E-Learning Branch of Saskatchewan Learning, the Department has a moderate level of influence over the training of Practical and Applied Arts teachers in the *Ready for Work* program. It is reasonable to assume that an increase in the number of teachers and students exposed to *Ready for Work* resources will be realized as a result of occupational health and safety and labour standards objectives being included as part of the core curriculum for Career and Work Exploration.

OBJECTIVE 2 – Improved work-family/life balance

A substantial increase in the number of dual-earner families and the number of employed lone-parents has intensified the stress and fatigue many employees experience as they attempt to balance their work-family/life responsibilities. Research shows that work-family conflict impacts on the economic well-being of business and service organizations in the private, public

and non-profit sectors. Generational differences in employee work expectations includes the finding that younger workers are not as work-centric as their parents and that young employees tend to be interested in achieving work and family balance. Thus, family-friendly workplaces are likely to become a critical recruitment and retention factor in the context of labour force shortages. Recent research now documents specific increases in health care utilization, which are tied to work-family stress in Canada. This has stimulated both employee and employer interest in government taking a lead to assist them to address this issue. The growing labour force shortage has also created an opportunity for many individuals who have been marginal to the labour force. Many of these employees face additional work-family pressures which the Work and Family Unit has responded to by developing strategies to engage these employees and their employers in work-family programs.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Implement the *2007 Work and Family Balance Awards* with the 2007 Awards Gala being held in Regina.
- Produce an appropriate knowledge transfer mechanism (texts, CD, etc.) based on the research and discourse at the March 2007 Work and Family Conference. These tools will celebrate the First Decade (1997-2007) of Saskatchewan Government Achievements in promoting work-family balance.
- Implement government direction regarding work-family recommendations in *The Commission on Improving Work Opportunities for Saskatchewan Residents.*
- Continue to engage with workplaces to assist in the process of creating culture, policy and practice that is supportive of employees with family responsibilities (using *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* and other consultation and training).
- Continue to implement a sector engagement plan which develops specific local work-family initiatives in partnership with organizations which represent employees who are marginal to labour force participation and who, in these times of labour force shortages, have opportunity to obtain employment (for example, low wage employees, Métis, First Nations employees, new Canadians). Such initiatives include the development of knowledge in respect to the "balance" issues of these employees as well as appropriate knowledge-transfer mechanism through which Saskatchewan employers can succeed in recruiting and retaining these employees.
- Continue to work with Saskatchewan Learning's Early Learning and Child Care Branch to implement the work and family aspects of the Early Learning and Care Strategy and to respond to the Federal Child Care Initiatives Community Child Care Investment, which engages employers.
- Continue to work with local work-family groups to promote implementation of non-legislative, work-family programming, which was advanced to the Federal Labour Standards Review Commission by Saskatchewan Labour.
- Facilitate the development of ongoing and new research capacity at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina relative to work-family issues.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Number of workplaces/organizations that request assistance in becoming aware of work and family issues	16 *[2005-06]* 14 *[2004-05]* 26 *[2003-04]*

This measure quantifies the number of workplaces and organizations that request the Department's assistance in becoming aware of work and family issues. Increased workplace knowledge on work and family issues is a precursor to improving work-family/life balance. Measurement results gauge voluntary involvement of employers, employees, and organizations in becoming more family friendly.

The level of requests is unpredictable and influenced by factors such as other workplace issues, changes in human resource personnel and availability of management's time.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Number of work and family community-based partnerships	3 *[2005-06]* 3 *[2004-05]* 3 *[2003-04]*

This measure quantifies the number of work and family community-based partnerships that have been developed and maintained in Saskatchewan. The capacity building approach of the Work and Family Unit assists representatives from business, labour, community and government sectors to partner in order to undertake public education and specific projects related to the lack of work-family balance. These groups reflect local interests and play a critical role in enhancing workplace and general public awareness about the importance of work-family balance. Whether these groups really "gel" is a product of numerous contextual factors over which we have little control.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Number of workplaces/organizations that the Unit is assisting to make workplace change (culture, policies, practices) through the application of *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* and other training and consultation as provided by the Work and Family Unit	4 *[2005-06]* 8 *[2004-05]* 1 *[2003-04]*

This measure quantifies the number of workplaces the Department is assisting to become more family friendly through the application of *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* and other training. *The Family-Friendly Workplace Portfolio* (print and electronic material) includes guides on change techniques, a local case study, and a set of field-tested instruments, which assess family-friendly strengths, gaps, and employees' priorities for multi-year workplace change objectives. Becoming more family-friendly refers to a process, which develops a family-friendly approach to many aspects of work, including work arrangements, management style and the overall attitudes and values within the work environment. Many factors such as economic well-being and organizational readiness, as well as our limited marketing resources, reduce the level of influence over the measurement results.

What are we measuring?	Progress to date
Number of projects/programs undertaken within the "sector engagement plan" which seeks to engage employees and employers who, to date, have not been actively engaged in the work-family balance discourse (e.g., First Nations and Métis, low wage, retail and hospitality sector, small business, rural and northern)	0 *[2005-06]*

This measures the success of the Unit in involving employers (and their employees) who have found themselves marginal to the labour force (and marginal to the work-family dialogue). The types of engagement process and knowledge transfer tools, which will be useful in this regard, will be determined by the identified groups and will require a partnership approach to successful involvement.

OBJECTIVE 3 – Fair and timely resolution of Workers' Compensation appeals on behalf of injured workers

The Office of the Worker's Advocate (OWA) provides assistance to any injured worker or dependant of any injured worker who has suffered a work-related injury and who has a dispute with the Workers' Compensation Board concerning their claim for compensation.

The Office of the Worker's Advocate represents workers or their dependants at appeals with the Workers' Compensation Board. In addition to representing workers through the appeals process, the Office will also assist an injured worker to obtain benefits they are entitled to without taking the dispute through the appeals process.

A work-related injury could have a significant impact on a worker and his/her family should the worker not receive the benefits he/she may be entitled to. An early resolution of disputes with the Workers' Compensation Board can minimize the negative financial, medical and family impacts that disputes can cause.

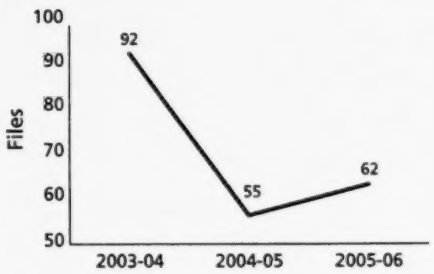
Key Actions for 2007-08

- Continue development of new programs to track the number and types of requests the Office of the Worker's Advocate receives.
- Review and revise existing programs to ensure that injured workers are provided with the level of assistance they require.
- Continue to streamline processes that will result in effective and efficient use of existing resources.
- Act on the recommendation of The Workers' Compensation Act Committee of Review concerning the objectives of the Office.

What are we measuring?

Number of files waiting for the services of a Worker's Advocate

Progress to date



This measures our ability to provide service to our clients effectively and efficiently. This will allow us to determine resource requirements.

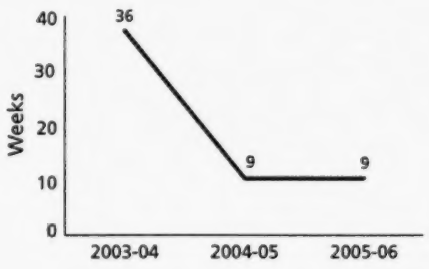
This measure quantifies the number of assigned files in comparison to the total number of files, both assigned and unassigned, being held by the OWA. Providing us with information to gauge

the success of the programs we offer as well as ensure our Office has the appropriate amount of resources.

What are we measuring?

Length of time injured workers must wait for the services of a Worker's Advocate

Progress to date



We are measuring the period of time an injured worker has to wait for the services of a Worker's Advocate after he/she has contacted our office to request assistance.

This measures our ability to provide service to our clients in an effective manner. This will allow us to provide services that best suit the needs of injured workers.

GOAL 4

Equality of Saskatchewan Women

OBJECTIVE – *Increase women's ability to contribute to, and benefit from, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities and resources*

Through the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women*, the Government of Saskatchewan will support initiatives to advance women's equality and improve women's ability to contribute to, and benefit from, economic, social, political and cultural opportunities and resources.

The Action Plan rests on four pillars: economic equality and security, safety, health and well-being, and equitable participation in leadership and decision-making. To advance the Action Plan, the Status of Women Office will expand its external network of stakeholders, with special initiatives targeting Saskatchewan's North.

Women's equality and safety, and the prosperity and heaith of children and families, depends in part on involving young women. Involving youth, including young Aboriginal women, in the development of policies and programs is a fundamental part of building prosperous, healthy and vibrant communities in Saskatchewan. Girls and women must be encouraged to be more visible as leaders and play a stronger leadership role in the Province.

Within government, we will continue to provide expertise and training in gender-based analysis to help raise policy maker's awareness of the differences between men's and women's lives, and of the impacts of policy on women.

Initiatives to support this objective would include:

- involvement of young women in our consultation processes to advance our capacity to inform government about the priorities of young women in terms of policy, programs, services and legislative development;
- assessment of existing *Alternatives to Violence* promotional materials targeted specifically to raise the awareness of young women and girls; and
- reviewing the extent to which gender-based analysis (GBA) is incorporated into government decision-making.

Key Actions for 2007-08

- Review and revise the objectives of the *Action Plan for Saskatchewan Women* and monitor and report progress.
- Advance development of a northern women's network from the current five communities represented to eight out of a total of 20 identified northern communities.
- Develop strategies and initiatives to involve young women in decision-making, processes.
- Raise awareness of alternatives to violence, through development of promotional materials, specifically targeted to young women and girls.
- Prepare a background report on women's labour force attachment in Saskatchewan.
- Collect and disseminate statistics of women's wages in different occupations in Saskatchewan.
- Review the number of processes that have been developed to monitor GBA integration into government policy development. This will identify the characteristics of existing and needed GBA processes.
- Provide expert advice, analysis, and resources to public sector employers and other workplaces, undertaking pay equity projects.
- Meet with 10 women's groups, whose membership may include provincial and local stakeholders, to ensure that women's diverse voices, priorities, experiences and ideas are integrated into government policy.
- Promote International Women's Day, Women's History Month, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and prepare communications to raise public awareness for advancing women's equality.

What are we measuring?	**Progress to date**
Number of communities, out of a total of 20 identified northern communities, represented in a northern women's network	Increase the number of communities represented on the Northern Women's Network from the current 5 to a total of 8

This measure quantifies the number of northern communities our department is assisting to have a voice in consultation processes, which will identify and articulate common priorities and concerns for a diverse group of northern women.

For More Information

If you have any questions or comments about the Plan, or would like additional copies, we invite you to call:

Saskatchewan Labour
Communications Branch
(306) 787-3637

Or visit us on-line at:

http://www.labour.gov.sk.ca

- Provides information on departmental programs, news releases, policy initiatives, legislative reviews including discussion papers and reports, and proposed legislative amendments.

For additional information, visit:

http://www.readyforwork.sk.ca

- Provides information for students/workers, teachers and employers regarding rights and responsibilities of workers and employers, labour legislation, a guide for new workers and instructional videos on work. It also provides a list of publications and links to other organizations.

http://www.swo.gov.sk.ca

- Provides information on the role of the Status of Women Office (SWO), government policies pertaining to women, publications available from the SWO, the Saskatchewan Women's Directory On-line, statistical updates and links to other organizations.

http://www.workandfamilybalance.com

- Provides information on the Balancing Work and Family Program, recent research in Canada, community-based partnerships, publications and links to other organizations.

http://www.worksafesask.ca

- Provides a collection of information designed to help workers and employers prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace. The collection contains hundreds of documents on a wide variety of workplace issues. It also contains information from other public sources.

http://www.sasklabourrelationsboard.com

- Provides information about the Labour Relations Board, Board processes, an annual report, the current board agenda, on-line forms, labour relations legislation, publications and policies and recent board decisions.